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Labourers' Friend Society

On the formation of auxiliary
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PUBLISHED BY

THE LABOURERS' FRIEND SOCIETY.

ON THE FORMATION OF AUXILIARY SOCIETIES.

IN consequence of numerous applications for a set of rules to aid the formation of Auxiliary Societies, the Committee beg to remark, that it would be impossible to draw up a code, applicable to every variety of situation and circumstance; but the standing rules and by-laws of the Society, (with trifling alterations), together with the following hints, will, they trust, be found fully available for the purpose.

There can be no doubt that the enrolment of Auxiliaries under the Parent Society would be advantageous, (for union is strength); but the portion of the funds to be transmitted, must be left to the discretion of the auxiliaries, who will see the importance of assisting the efforts of the Parent Society, and the advantage of establishing a focus for communication throughout the kingdom.

Each auxiliary will be *entitled* to the monthly publications upon the same conditions as members; and it is requested that they forward a half-yearly report of the progress of the system within their district, as also any information from time to time which may be considered worthy of publication.

HINTS RELATIVE TO THE FORMING OF AUXILIARY OR LOCAL SOCIETIES, (ON THE SYSTEM OF THE LABOURER'S FRIEND SOCIETY.)

THE Society should be completely independent of parish authorities, no agreement should be entered into for the poor man to relinquish his right to parish relief; circumstances, may indeed, have induced the poor man to accede to such terms; but others,

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suspecting it was a means of depriving them of their legal rights, have rejected the offer. Nor must it be held out as a boon, but as a fair contract between man and man; the object being to create in the labourer a spirit of independence, as the surest way to keep him from the parish.

Some persons, in allotting land, exclude bad characters; such exclusion should, at any rate, if at all, be acted upon with the utmost caution; for we should try to reclaim the bad, as well as to benefit the good; but if, after a fair trial, the desired effect is not attained, it will then be right, by way of example, to deprive such of their land; some distinction may also be adopted, such as obliging a man of bad character to provide security for the payment of rent, or making him pay his rent before the crop is harvested.

The allotments should not, at first, be too large; under ordinary circumstances, perhaps a rood would be the most convenient size, with the promise of extension as an encouragement.—Occupation of the land for a term of years should be guaranteed, subject to good conduct and conformity to rules.

To avoid the “Irish sub-letting misery,” the land should in no case be underlet, or exchanged without permission.

The land should be let at its actual value, such as a farmer would give for it; it is a mistaken act of kindness to let it rent-free, or for less than its value, and an act of oppression to let it for more. In the immediate vicinity of large towns, where land bears such a price that no poor man can rent it with chance of success, the only mode will be, though it is an exception to the general rule, for the Local Society to rent the land, and relet it at a remunerating price, the difference to be made up from the funds of the Society.

If any fencing is necessary, so much per annum may be added to the rent, until the whole expence is paid off, or it may be done by the tenants themselves; and if it is expected that more land will be required the following year, they may be allowed to put up a temporary deadwood hedge, which being their own property as firewood, will be taken care of.

A Michaelmas tenure will be most convenient, and the rent paid at Midsummer and Michaelmas: at those periods the tenant is in the receipt of hay and harvest wages.

After the first year, no more than half of any allotment should be cropped with potatoes.

The quantity of manure required, must depend on the state of the land, and the nature of the soil; but under ordinary circumstances, one load, per rood, per annum, would be a fair proportion.

A forfeit should be levied upon any tenant working on a Sunday, or during his master's time; and expulsion enforced, if repeated.

It will be desirable to retain the right of taking possession of any allotment, in default of payment of rent, or breach of rules, therefore each tenant should sign his name to the conditions.

Although the benefits to be derived by the simple occupation of the land would be a sufficient stimulus to exertion, yet prizes, if judiciously offered, are a source of considerable advantage to the receiver, and gratification to the donor, without coming under the denomination of eleemosynary relief. We would advise that the value of each prize be laid out in articles connected with the tenure of land, viz. tools, pigs, seed, manure, &c.—To have the desired effect, the award must be made with the strictest impartiality, and none should be admitted to the competition, who have not strictly conformed to the rules.

Although we have been rather liberal of our hints, we by no means advise many restrictive conditions; they do but confuse and shackle the poor man; but we cannot conclude without recommending the old English custom of a rent-dinner, on the last rent-day at Michaelmas; independent of the good feeling it creates between the rich and poor, it is a great stimulus to prompt payment.

THE following Rules, having been found efficient in the places where they have been adopted, are submitted to the consideration of other Country Associations.

RULES AND REGULATIONS ADOPTED IN THE PARISH OF WOBURN.

- 1st.—The rent to be paid yearly, on the 11th of October.
- 2nd.—No occupier will be suffered to re-let his allotment.
- 3rd.—No person shall be employed on the land, who does not belong to the parish.*
- 4th.—No occupier will be allowed to plough his land, but be required to cultivate it solely by spade husbandry.
- 5th.—If any occupier is found neglectful in the cultivation of his land, he will not be permitted to hold it after the current year.
- 6th.—No occupier, who is at work for the parish, or for any employer, will be allowed to work upon his land after six o'clock in the morning, or before six in the evening, without permission from his master.
- 7th.—No occupier will be suffered to trespass upon another's allotment.
- 8th.—All occupiers will be expected to attend regularly at divine service; to conduct themselves with sobriety at all times; and to bring up their families in a decent and orderly manner.
- 9th.—Any occupier who may be convicted of poaching, thieving, or of any other offence against the laws of his country, will be deprived of his garden.

* We think this rule should be made to comprehend all inhabitants, whether they belong to the parish, or not.—ED.

TAUNTON AND WEST SOMERSET ASSOCIATION.

1.—That the occupiers of allotments shall not under-let them, or any part of them, or feed any live stock on them. They shall be at liberty to relinquish their allotments by giving six weeks' notice to the Committee, who shall accept a new tenant, and cause a valuation to be put upon the crop, to be paid by the incoming tenant.

2.—That the occupiers of the several allotments shall cultivate them in an approved manner, solely by spade husbandry, and by themselves and their families; and shall not plant more than half their allotments with potatoes in any one year.* That every occupier shall manure his allotment, at least once in two years, with not less than twelve cart loads of rotten dung per acre, or a proportionate quantity of other manure.

3.—That the rent charged to the occupiers shall not exceed the fair average value of land in the neighbourhood, which, in addition to the tithe and parochial rates, shall be paid by the Committee, and be discharged by the occupiers, by four equal payments:—viz. on the 25th March, 24th June, 29th September, and 25th December. If the rent shall be in arrear fourteen days after the time fixed for payment, the Committee shall be at liberty to resume the occupation of such allotment so in arrear, paying the occupier the value of the crops, after deducting the rent due. The quantity of land to be let to any one person, to be at the discretion of the Committee, but in no one case to exceed *a quarter of an acre*.

4.—The occupiers shall be entitled to hold their respective allotments so long as the Society continues in the possession of the same, provided they conform to and fulfil the Rules and Regulations of the Society.

5.—If any tenant commit any wilful injury on his neighbour's allotment, or damage the fences, or persist in frequenting the public-house, or in excessive drinking, after having been reprov'd and warn'd, he shall be dispossessed of his allotment at the end of the year, without any remuneration for labour or crop.

6.—Every occupier shall regularly attend a place of worship on the Sabbath-day, together with his family.

GILLINGHAM (DORSETSHIRE) ASSOCIATION.

1.—The rent to be paid annually, on the 29th September.

2.—The tenant distinctly to understand, that, as the objects of the Society are intended solely for *his* benefit, his continuing to retain his allotment will depend on his own industry, sobriety, general good conduct, regularity in the payments of rent, and other incidental charges; and that, so long as his character continues to meet the Society's approval, he will be allowed to remain in possession; but that, if he fail in any of these respects, his allotment will be taken from him, at the end of the year, and assigned to another tenant.

3.—No occupier to plant more than half his allotment with potatoes in one year, without the special permission of the Committee.

4.—No occupier to be suffered to re-let his allotment.

5.—No occupier to be allowed to plough his land, but be required, solely, to cultivate by spade husbandry.

6.—No occupier to trespass upon another's allotment.

7.—Any disputes that may arise with any of the occupiers, respecting their allotment, to be referred to the Committee, and their decision to be binding.

8.—The fences of each field to be kept in repair by the occupiers, and the labour and expense equally proportioned.

9.—Any occupier who may be convicted of poaching, thieving, or any other offence against the laws of his country, will be deprived of his garden.

<p>1, Gillingham, do agree to take Committee of the Gillingham Labourers' Friend Society, situate As witness my hand, this Signed by</p>	<p>labourer, of the parish of of land, of the , at the yearly rent of _____ per , and subject to the regulations above specified. day of _____, 18 in the presence of _____</p>
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* This Rule has been waived for the present year.

THE LABOURERS' FRIEND SOCIETY,

Under the Patronage of Their Majesties.

THIS SOCIETY, keeping in view its national and patriotic object, is effecting silently, but surely, a permanent improvement in the condition of the labouring population; counteracting, in the most efficient manner, the spread of disaffection and discontent, with all those attendant evils by which the agricultural districts of the kingdom have been alarmed.

No disappointment has hitherto attended the operations of the Society; wherever its plans "have been fairly and judiciously tried," the poor who have had allotments, have either been withdrawn or prevented from being burdensome to the parish; their comforts greatly augmented, and their character improved; and it is a great satisfaction to find the system adverted to so favourably in the report of the Commissioners appointed to examine into the state of the Poor Laws.*

Although the efforts the Committee, are making, by means of their monthly publications, the circulation of which has been nearly doubled the last year, and by the employment of travelling Agents, have involved them in expences exceeding the income with which they have been hitherto intrusted, they are determined not to relax in their exertions, feeling assured the public will not allow a Society of such evident utility to fail for want of funds.

* Mr Majendie observes, "the benefit of Cottage Allotments is strongly shown at Saffron Walden.—Of all remedies for pauperism, this offers the most cheering prospect; it affords to the labourers the means of increasing the funds for their maintenance by their own exertions; it calls into action industry, the source of all capital, under the influence of the best feelings of our nature."—Vide also pages 16 and 41.

We regret to observe, that the Index of the Report of the Commissioners is most incorrect with respect to the Allotment System: it being confounded with plans at variance with its intentions. See the case of Gamlingay, page 131.

The income of the Society during the year ending January 31, 1834, has again been insufficient to meet the expenditure for Printing, Agents, Travelling expences, Secretary, Offices, and incidental charges.

In order to carry on the operations of the Society on a more extended scale, the Committee earnestly appeal to their friends and to the public in general, who feel an interest in an Institution so useful and benevolent, to supply the requisite funds by which they may be enabled to disseminate their views, by means of their publications and agents, through the length and breadth of the land.

With a view to the better management of the business of the Society, the Committee have removed from Sackville street and Threadneedle street to a central office, No. 20 Exeter Hall, Strand, where the Secretary is in attendance daily, from Twelve to Four.

The Society's publications are forwarded, free of expence, to Annual Subscribers of 10s. and Donors of £5, and are also sold at the Office to Non-subscribers.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

THE Committee having been informed, that notwithstanding their efforts to give publicity to the nature, design, and principles of their Society, they are still misunderstood by some persons, deem it necessary to circulate the following explicit statement, in order that the public may distinguish it from every other institution, and judge how far it is entitled to support :—

1st.—THE LABOURERS' FRIEND SOCIETY does not recommend the investment of capital in land, either in shares or any other form, except so far as it may be deemed expedient by parishes or local associations, to rent a suitable quantity to carry their plans into effect, or to comply with the "Act of the 1 & 2 of William the Fourth, for the relief and employment of the poor."

2nd.—Home colonization, or the settling a pauper population in any part of the country, for the cultivation of waste or other lands, is not the plan of the Society.

3rd.—The Society recommends the letting to the labourer so much land *only*, as he can cultivate with the aid of his family *during his leisure time*; consequently, not sufficient to make him a small farmer, or in any way independent of his regular labour.—The question of the preferableness of small or large farms, comes not within the Society's province.

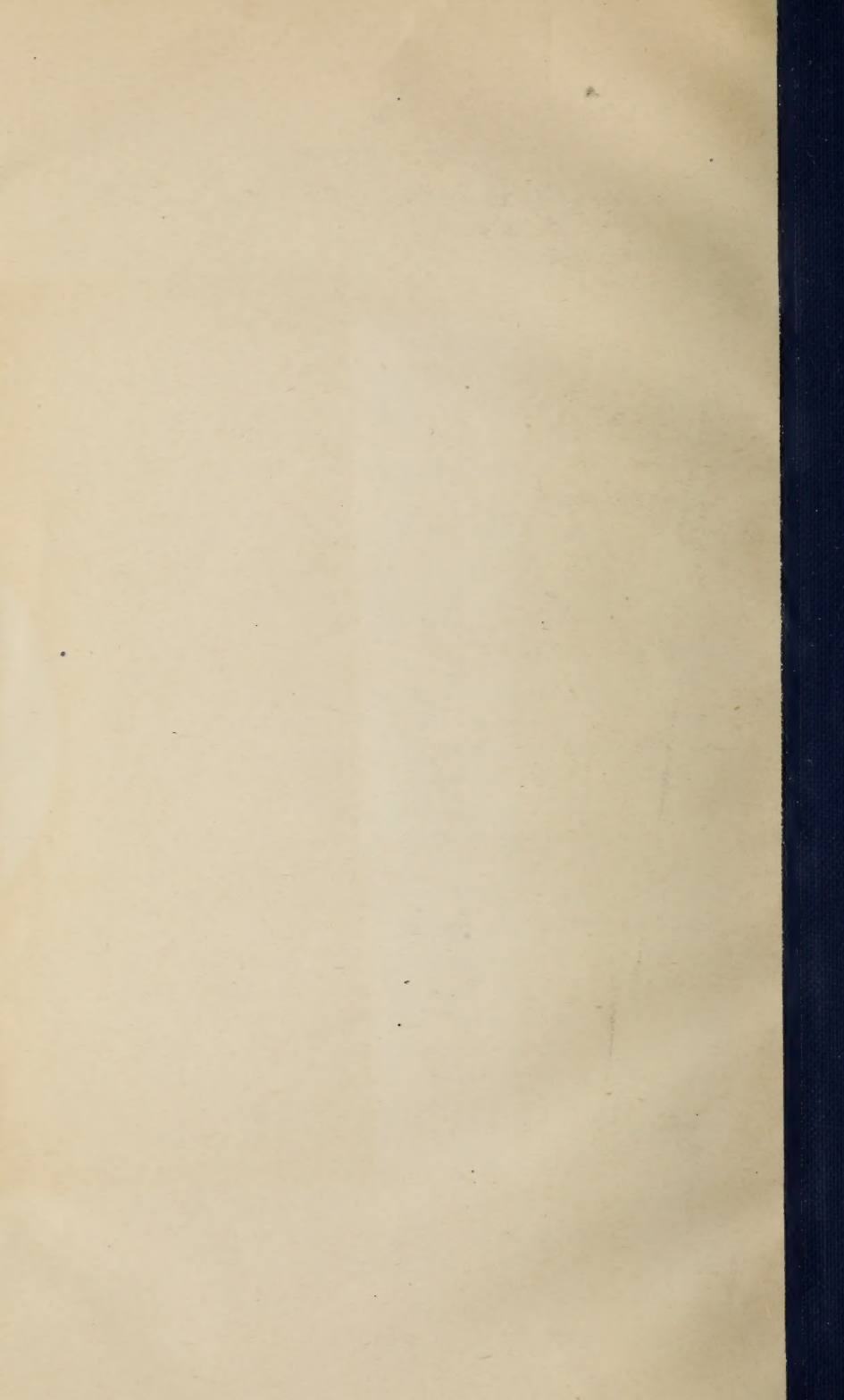
4th.—The Allotment System does not tend to the formation of a cottier population, similar to that which exists in Ireland; the land not being permitted to be underlet, and the rent not exorbitant, as in the case referred to, but the sum paid by the neighbouring farmers.

5th.—In recommending spade-husbandry, the Society confines its remarks to the effects of voluntary labour on the small portion of land proposed as an allotment, without reference to the question of profit and loss on a large scale, or of its applicability to agriculture in general.

6th.—The Society does not encourage the removal of labourers from one parish to another, but proposes rather to benefit them wherever they are found, to attach them to the soil, and to equalize the supply of labour to the demand.

7th.—The system recommended by the Society is founded on the basis of *profit* to the labourer, not *charity* or almsgiving. It assumes there is a surplus of labour; and that, in some parts of the country, the labouring man cannot obtain such full and constant employment as is adequate to his subsistence: it proposes, by allotting to him a small quantity of land, to find him profitable occupation for that part of his time which his employer does not require; and thus, by furnishing him with the means of raising a proportion of his most wholesome food in the most economical manner, he is made, by his own exertions, independent both of the parish, and of the charity of his neighbours.

Subscriptions and Donations received by Mr WOOD, the Secretary, or the Collector, No. 20 Exeter Hall, Strand.



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